



**CHARLOTTE**

# **2016 NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD RETREAT**



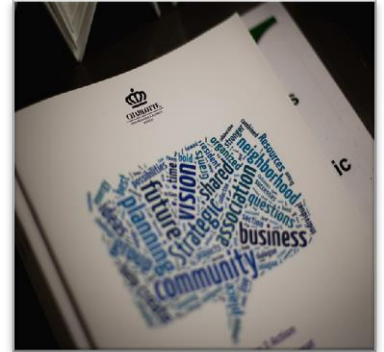
## **Avensong**

**Hosted by City of Charlotte Neighborhood & Business Services at Johnson C Smith University**

## 2016 Board Retreat

On Saturday March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the board members of Avensong participated in the Neighborhood Board Retreat facilitated by the City of Charlotte, hosted at Johnson C. Smith University. The following board members participated in the retreat:

• Cassandra Nathan	• Elaine Wood
• Ulinda Forehand	• Kamryn Nathan
• Sherry Washington	•



## Purpose

- Generate meaningful conversations around improving quality of life in our community
- Set clear goals and priorities for the upcoming year(s)
- Develop a vision and strategic priorities for our community

To receive this credit we'll submit our completed Vision to Action Idea Development Plan Workbook with our NMG request. This credit will expire following the June 1, 2016 NMG application deadline.

Our board retreat was conducted by trained facilitators tasked to keep our conversations on-task, productive, and focused on achievable objectives. The process was designed to help capture the best of the past, the best of the present, and how we can add to our strengths to build a better future. The focus was:

- Developing a vision to guide our decision making and activities
- Developing strategic priorities that aligned with our vision
- Developing project ideas

The agenda for the day was as follows:

- Introductions
- Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?: Arrow Activity
- Where We Want to Be: Vision Statement Exercise
- Seeing the Forest through the Trees: Developing Strategic Priorities
- Working Lunch – The Year Ahead
- Idea Development – Time for participants for develop an action plan for goal achievement.

### Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?

We began our day with paired interviews, using the “Where Are We Going, Where Have We Been?” activity. The activity was intended to help us reflect on:

- What we value
- What are the best things about our community and the people who live here
- What are our past successes
- Where are the potentials and possibilities

After interviewing our partners we shared our discussion with the group, finding commonalities in our conversations.

Where We Were: Reflecting on our past, what were some of the best/worst moments?	Where We Are: Why would or wouldn't a person/business want to move into our community?	Where We Want to Be: If you could make 3 wishes to make our community flourish, what would they be?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a brand new community</li> <li>• Homes had great floor plans</li> <li>• Families were moving in</li> <li>• Community led block parties/movie nights</li> <li>• No access to a playground</li> <li>• HOA's board was intrusive</li> <li>• No trees/no shade</li> <li>• HOA incentives for neighbors that planted trees</li> <li>• Yard of the Month incentives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More renters than owners</li> <li>• Foreclosed properties, investors are buying</li> <li>• Neighbors are defaulting on mortgage loans and property values are going down</li> <li>• We have nosy neighbors that care</li> <li>• We look out for each other</li> <li>• Informal Community roster</li> <li>• Community led newsletter</li> <li>• Traffic issues (speed signs are inconsistent)</li> <li>• Teens out of control</li> <li>• Trash issue (dog waste)</li> <li>• Neighboring community has issues that are trickling into ours (trash, break-ins)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase tree canopy</li> <li>• Have a community we're proud of – we want to pull in and be proud to call Avensong our home</li> <li>• Have welcome packets for new neighbors</li> <li>• Bring back Yard of the Month and other Curb Appeal initiatives</li> <li>• Trash cans for dog waste</li> <li>• Have a nice fence at both entrances</li> <li>• Improve community's communications so we can increase participation</li> </ul>

## Our Vision

Our vision is the unifying statement for our community that will guide our decision making and reminds us of what we are trying to reach. It is based on our shared values and preferences for our community's future. It combines the best of what was, what is, and what could be.

**OUR VISION: AYENSONG, 162 HOMES = ONE FAMILY**

## Strategic Priorities

After committing to a shared vision, the board began to brainstorm on strategic priorities. This is where we began to define what is most important to us in order to achieve our vision. Strategic priorities are initiatives that will help us move closer to our vision of our community. The idea is to focus on a few things and do them very well as opposed to many things and missing the mark.

We started out thinking big and then narrowed down our focus using the Affinity Mapping Process, detailed below:

- Grab some sticky notes from the table. Keeping the vision statement in mind, write down as many of the following as you can think of, one per sticky note:
  - Current action items getting you closer to our vision.
  - Possible priorities/actions items to get us closer to our vision.
- Place the sticky notes on the wall.
- Organize the ideas by natural categories, once everyone agrees on the groups, give each one a name.



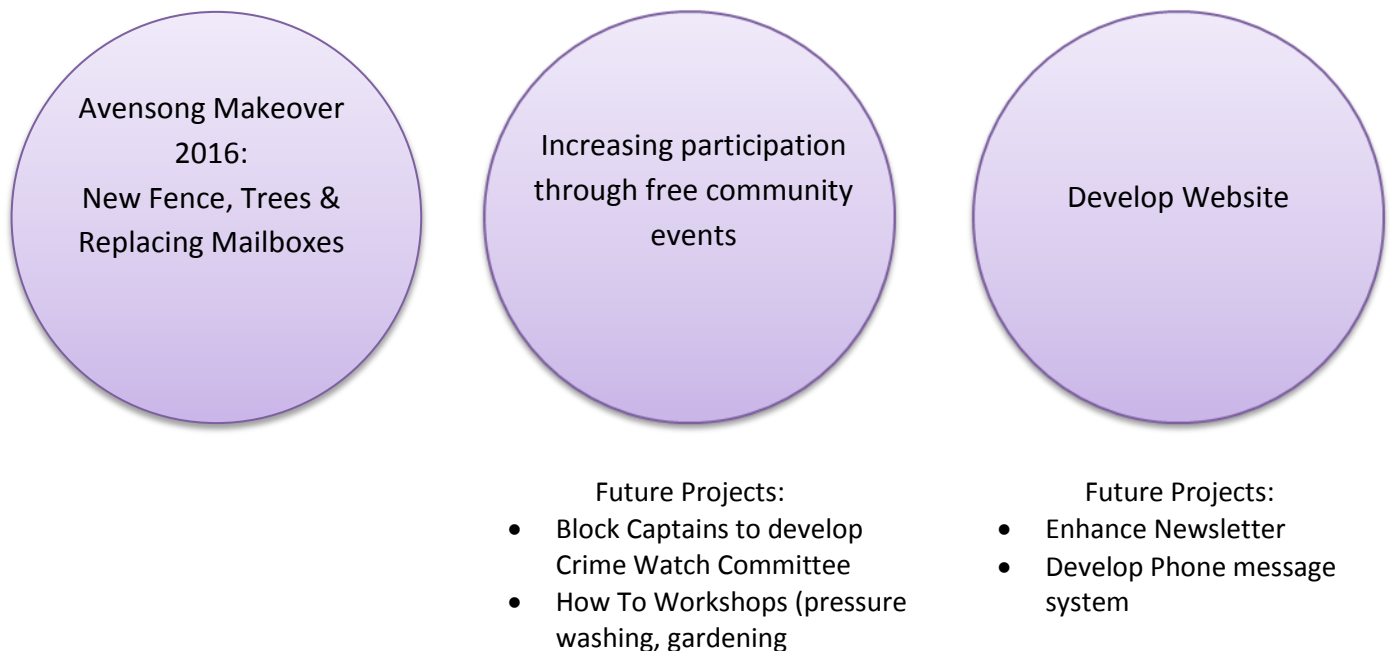
This activity led us to the following initiatives being identified as important within our community:

- Beautification
- Participation
- Youth Engagement
- Engagement
- Landscaping
- Traffic calming

Each participant was provided three (3) stickers to be used for voting. Stickers could be placed all on one or two items or shared amongst all of the ideas identified. The three categories receiving the most votes are the strategic priorities that are most important for us to begin working on to achieve our vision, these are:



[Action Items for 2015-2016](#) The three activities selected as most impactful toward achieving our strategic priorities are activities in 2015-2016 are:



## 2016 Neighborhood Board Retreat Summary

### **AYENSONG**

**OUR VISION: AYENSONG, 162 HOMES = ONE FAMILY**

**TO HELP US REACH OUR VISION; WE WILL FOCUS ON THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

1

Community Pride

2

Engagement

3

Communication

**IN 2015-2016, WE WILL WORK ON THESE ACTIVITIES GUIDED BY OUR PRIORITIES:**

Avensong Makeover  
2016 Initiative  
(Fence, Trees &  
Mailboxes)

Increase participation  
through free  
community events

Develop Website



**Parking lot issues or items:**

- Neighborhood Sports teams
- Teen activities / create a hangout space for kids
- Welcome packets
- Community Center collaboration

**Avensong desired outcomes from the Neighborhood Board****Retreat were:**

- Community Engagement Development – ideas on how to get quorum at the meetings
- Better Quality of Life for their neighbors
- Idea sharing about resources available to them

**Deadlines agreed on by the group during the retreat:**

- April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – T-shirt template message is finalized
- April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – Newsletter is finalized
- April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – NeighborWoods application petitions are complete
- April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – Neighborhood Matching Grant application is submitted
- May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – NeighborWoods application is submitted
- June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – Block Captains are identified

**Resources that could support our efforts:**

- City of Charlotte NBS
- CMPD
- Charlotte Fire Department
- Hawthorne Management & Board
- Sponsors/local businesses/Neighbors
- TreesCharlotte







**Resources to Get Started-** You’ve rolled up your sleeves and established your vision, the following resources may assist your organization in achieving your goals. Links and contact information are provided for information only and are subject to change.

Project	Getting Started	Resources
<b>Project #1</b> <b>Avensong</b> <b>Makeover 2016</b> <b>Initiative</b>  <b>(Fence, Trees &amp; Mailboxes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize a community cleanup</li> </ul>	<p><b>Keep Charlotte Beautiful (KCB)</b> - KCB has been helping to keep Charlotte clean &amp; beautiful since 1974. Visit <a href="http://kcb.charmeck.org">kcb.charmeck.org</a> or call 704-353-1235 to learn how to Adopt a City Street (AACS), participate in a Great American Clean-Up event or to learn tips and borrow supplies for your next neighborhood clean-up.</p> <p><b>Charlotte Community ToolBank</b> - offers low-cost large &amp; small hand and power tool rental, trash receptacles, tables, generators, etc. Visit <a href="http://charlotte.toolbank.org">charlotte.toolbank.org</a> or call 704-469-5800 to view their inventory and make reservations</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore funding options</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neighborhood Matching Grants (NMG) Program</b> - Charlotte’s NMG Program can provide grants of up to \$25k to eligible neighborhood organizations for community improvement projects. To determine eligibility or learn program details please visit <a href="http://charlottenc.gov/nmg">charlottenc.gov/nmg</a> or call 704-336-4594</p> <p><b>Keep Charlotte Beautiful</b> – offers an annual beautification grant. Visit <a href="http://kcb.charmeck.org">kcb.charmeck.org</a> or call 704-353-1235</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve your skills through How-To workshops</li> </ul>	<p><b>Home Depot Weekly Workshops</b> – visit <a href="http://thd.co/20rH9LH">http://thd.co/20rH9LH</a> or call your local store</p> <p><b>Lowes How-To Library</b>- visit <a href="http://www.lowes.com/how-to-library">www.lowes.com/how-to-library</a> or call your local store for clinics</p>
<b>Project #2</b>  <b>Increase participation through free community events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan a great party for residents</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neighborhood Block Party Planning Toolkit</b>- <a href="http://bit.ly/1TSlaZI">http://bit.ly/1TSlaZI</a></p> <p><b>Temporary Street Closure Procedures and Approval</b>- Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) <a href="http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx">http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/Pages/Home.aspx</a></p> <p><b>Noise/Sound Permit Information</b> – CMPD <a href="http://bit.ly/1OSUOdQ">http://bit.ly/1OSUOdQ</a> or call 311</p> <p><b>National Night Out</b>- Nationwide event held each August, find details and resources at <a href="http://natw.org/">natw.org/</a></p> <p><b>Festival &amp; Special Event Funding</b> – Neighborhood Matching Grants <a href="http://charlottenc.gov/nmg">charlottenc.gov/nmg</a> or call 704-336-4594 to determine eligibility or learn program details</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free meeting/event Speakers 45+ topics</li> </ul>	<p><b>Need A Speaker Speakers Bureau</b> – visit <a href="http://needaspeaker.charmeck.org">needaspeaker.charmeck.org</a> or call 704-336-2175</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrate volunteers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neighborhood Volunteer Appreciation Ideas</b> - visit <a href="http://bit.ly/1L6ok8H">http://bit.ly/1L6ok8H</a></p>

<b>Project #3</b>  <b>Develop Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore Funding Options</li> </ul>	<b>Neighborhood Matching Grants</b> can provide funding for websites, logos and other organizational development efforts. Visit <a href="http://charlottenc.gov/nmg">charlottenc.gov/nmg</a> or call 704-336-4594 to determine eligibility or learn program details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore Free Websites</li> </ul>	<b>Neighborhood Link</b> – provides free, basic website design and hosting services, visit <a href="http://neighborhoodlink.com">neighborhoodlink.com</a>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider free, social media opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Facebook</b> – Facebook.com provides free pages for individuals and organizations. Information is generally publicly accessible, be sure to check your settings to ensure your page meets your intended specifications. Posts can be scheduled in advance using sites like <a href="http://hootsuite.com">hootsuite.com</a></p> <p><b>NextDoor</b>- Create a private social network for people who live within your neighborhood <a href="http://Nextdoor.com">Nextdoor.com</a>. Also allows event promotion.</p> <p><b>Twitter</b>- Twitter.com allows your organization to tweet short statements about events and interesting information. Tweets can be scheduled in advance using sites like <a href="http://hootsuite.com">hootsuite.com</a></p> <p><b>Instagram</b>- online photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking service, visit <a href="http://Instagram.com">Instagram.com</a></p>

**Your community is located within Charlotte’s South East Service Area, your staff contact for following up and community assistance is:**

Denise Coleman, Southeast Service Area Specialist - E-mail: [drcoleman@charlottenc.gov](mailto:drcoleman@charlottenc.gov) Phone: 704-353-1235

